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WAR, RELIGION AND PREPAREDNESS

The following interesting articles are in answer to a letter reading as follows:

"THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE, the established organ of the peace movement in America, is seeking to gather the opinions of a few leaders of religious thought upon the question of war, as it affects the United States in the present crisis.

"Would you be willing to write for us, to appear in connection with other similar articles in an early number, a brief statement of your views upon what should be the attitude of the church and religion toward war in general and toward the issue of increasing military preparedness in the United States in particular.

"THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE would especially appreciate the courtesy of your co-operation in this undertaking."

These articles are the second two received.—THE EDITOR.

By The REV. JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

Pastor of The Church of the Messiah,
New York City

THE attitude of the church and religion toward war should be one of unqualified opposition at all times and under all conditions. Where religion is, there can be no war; where war is, there can be no religion. I should as soon think of taking space to justify this answer as to justify the necessary opposition of religion to human sacrifice, infanticide, or chattel slavery. War is hate, and hate has no place within the human heart. War is death, and death has no place within the realms of life. "War is hell," and hell has no more place in the human order than in the divine. Walt Whitman, in language as forceful as it is inelegant, summed up the whole matter when he said:

"O God! this whole damned war business is about nine hundred and ninety-nine parts diarrhoea to one part glory. . . . Wars are hellish business—all wars. . . . Any honest man says so—hates war, fighting, blood-letting. I was in the midst of it all—saw war where war was worst—not on the battlefields, no—in the hospitals: there war is worst: there I mixed with it, and now I say: God damn the war—all wars! God damn every war!"

The fact that most churches and ministers in the combatant countries of Europe are furthering war and blessing war, proves not that this war, or any war, is justifiable from the God point of view, but only that religion has not yet remade society spiritually, and is itself as barbarous as the civilization which it reflects.

As to the more particular question "of increasing military preparedness in the United States," I am glad to record in the ADVOCATE OF PEACE my unqualified opposition to the whole preparedness movement. I believe that the church should oppose the increase of our army by a single soldier, our navy by a single torpedo boat, our equipment by a single rifle at this moment of world disaster. It should do this because such increase is *unnecessary*, in view of the fact that the present conflict is speedily bringing exhaustion to all great powers of the earth; *unwise*, in view of the fact that it would inevitably be interpreted as a hostile act, and therefore be made the source of endless suspicion and hatred among peoples seeking sympathy, and not fresh menace, in their distress; *immoral*, in view of the fact that an armed or arming America is the one thing best calculated to defeat the prospect of immediate or progressive disarmament at the close of the great war.

More important still, however, is the fact that the policy of military preparedness involves complete repudiation and defiance of that supreme trust in God and in the power of His spirit which the church is supposed distinctively to represent. If religion stands for anything, it stands for love as the practicable law of life.

To support the preparedness movement is to deny that law, to give up the hope of the kingdom which is founded on that law, to flout the will of God which has ordained that law. The Preparedness Parade in New York, with its one hundred and thirty clergymen in line, proves not that the movement for increased armaments is righteous, but that today, as yesterday, the crowd, at the dictation of shrewd leaders, shouts: "Not this man, but Barrabas," and that priests of God are still not ashamed to join in the cry.

I believe in God as the Spirit of universal love, in Jesus as the teacher of universal love, in the kingdom as the order of universal love. Therefore do I have no place in my religion for war or preparation for war.

By the REV. CHARLES A. EATON

Pastor of The Madison Avenue Baptist Church,
New York City

I BELIEVE in complete military, economic, political, and spiritual preparedness for this nation. Only by such preparation shall we be able successfully to defend our citizens, our commerce, our territory and our honor; champion the principles of democracy and humanity for which, as a nation, we stand, wherever and whenever they are endangered, and command the respect of mankind when, with the other great nations, we take up the task of rebuilding a wrecked world. Our danger is real because we are rich and defenseless, and because the present war proves that we have no guarantee, except our own strength, against attack.

By military preparedness, I mean the creation of a regular army of at least two hundred thousand men, enlisted for a term long enough to make real soldiers of them; a reserve of at least eight hundred thousand men; compulsory military training of every boy in the nation after the Swiss idea; a navy large enough for real defense of both oceanic approaches to our country; equipment and ammunition to meet any sudden emergency like the recent invasion of Belgium; the whole program to be under Federal control and supported by Federal taxation.

By economic preparedness, I mean the mobilization of our manufacturing industry under Federal control, so that we shall always have an army of workmen trained in the production of weapons and ammunition and in the building of sea and air craft. In this phase of proper preparedness, I include the development of our financial system so that the capital of the nation can be mobilized for its defense without panic or waste, and the organization of our material resources so that America may take her place and share in the trade of the world.

By political preparedness, I mean the education of public opinion until we have eliminated the spoilsman,

the sentimentalist, the sectionalist, and the hyphenate, and established a robust Americanism characterized equally by an intelligent nationalism and genuine internationalism.

By spiritual preparedness, I mean a general rise in moral level, so that as a people we may once more come to know, believe in, and live for those ideals and principles of government and life upon which our nation is builded. True Americanism puts honor above life or death or money; is willing to fight for freedom and justice; believes that the nation's soul is worth more than

any material gain; puts manhood first, and recognizes that moral obligation involves sacrifice.

In spite of the events of the past two years, I hope that the war will be followed by the creation of a world alliance for peace, with a world court whose decrees shall be enforced by a world army and navy in accordance with recognized international law.

Adequate preparedness now will give America a place in this new age; and in proportion as world peace prevails, the necessity for military preparedness will be lessened.

THE RACIAL VALUE OF DEATH

By PAUL POPENOE *

You will not often convince a mother mourning over her lost child that the death of that child was necessary to ensure the continued welfare of the race.

You will not often convince a mother mourning over her lost child that the death of that child was necessary to ensure the continued welfare of the race.

Yet such a statement would, as often as not, be true. The dispassionate student of evolution knows that the upward progress of mankind has been due very largely to the fact that the less fit in each generation were killed off, leaving the more fit to reproduce their kind. That is the action of natural selection, which in half a million years has raised man to his present condition from a condition resembling that of the apes. So far as we are able to see, the principal tool with which natural selection has worked is the selective death rate.

The young science of eugenics—"the study of the agencies under social control which may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations, physically or mentally"—has been able, in the last few years, actually to measure this selective death rate. The statistical studies of Pearson, Ploetz, and others have proved that, even under modern conditions, from a half to three-fourths of all the deaths that occur are the deaths of those who, because of heredity, were not fit to survive in the conditions to which they were subjected. The remaining deaths must be ascribed to chance. If a man is run down by a moving train, for example, his inherited excellence of constitution is of little avail to him; but if a man dies from tuberculosis, it indicates that he probably lacked an inborn resistance to that disease; and if he died before leaving offspring, the average of the race will be just that much stronger in the next generation in respect to tuberculosis resistance.

Do not think that a bad environment can be blamed for this great proportion of selective deaths. It holds good even in the European royal families, where it must be supposed that every child gets as good care as can be given. Broadly speaking, I think we will not go too far if we say that under modern civilized conditions two-thirds of all those who die are the victims of natural selection, and their deaths make possible the upward evolution of the race.

Now that is a very bloody and wasteful way of making progress; it causes an immense amount of human suffering and economic loss. Eugenics, therefore, has undertaken to supplant this method by one that is more in harmony with our feelings—to insure evolution through a selective birth rate instead of a selective death rate; to reduce the number of misfits whom nature has to kill off by seeing that as few misfits as possible are born.

The progress of the race, I have pointed out, is very largely due to the fact that the less fit in each generation die prematurely, leaving the more fit to propagate the race. Thanks to heredity, the next generation therefore inherits "more fit" instead of "less fit" characters.

Now suppose we should reverse this state of affairs, killing off the more fit prematurely and leaving the less fit to propagate the race. What happens?

Obviously, the next generation inherits "less fit" instead of "more fit" characters. The evolution of the race continues—it can never stop; but the direction it has been taking in the past is exactly reversed. If the curve was going up in the past, it must now go down; if the race was formerly improving with each generation, it must now deteriorate with each generation.

This, I regret to say, is no hypothetical case. It is not an amusing problem invented by the mathematically inclined biologist to teach his pupils a lesson in statistics.

It is what is actually happening today.

The general outlines of the problem are simple, but the details are extraordinarily complex. Let us examine a few of them. We may well begin by recalling that of all the children born in a civilized country nowadays, probably 40 per cent of them die before reaching maturity. This represents largely a selective death rate: Nature has ruthlessly eliminated the weeds in the garden as soon as they manifested themselves, and has thus left more room for the good plants to grow. It follows that the boy who reaches manhood has already passed through a long series of tests of his fitness to survive, and has demonstrated so far that he is sound. I am speaking, of course, only of broad racial tendencies, of statistical averages. I do not ignore the fact that many a weakling is enabled to prolong his life nowadays through the resources of medicine and surgery, of charity and philanthropy, when he could not do so in free competition.

The men who reach the age at which they are capable of bearing arms, I repeat, are a selected class, and under

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